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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE Y.M.C.A. EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

A FOLLOW-UP STUDY

by

(C) HEIKE JUERGENS

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE

STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT

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MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1979

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled The Y.M.C.A. Employment Program, A Follow-up Study submitted by Heike Juergens in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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Date ...Oct/79.....

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to provide a four-year follow-up review of all clients who had been referred to the Y.M.C.A. Employment Program in 1974. Descriptive and employment data were assessed to determine job placement and employment success and to identify any factors which differentiated successful versus non-successful clients.

A questionnaire survey approach was utilized and its applicability discussed. A response sample of forty-four clients was obtained to the 110 questionnaires sent.

Chi-Square analyses were conducted to assess:

1. The representativeness of the obtained sample.
2. The significance of selected factors in relation to employment success.
3. The relationship between job placement success and whether a client had received related vocational training in school.
4. The relationship between job placement success and how the client had found the job (Y.M.C.A. program, on their own, etc.)

Findings of this study indicated that, for the sample group obtained, 56.8% of the clients were successfully employed during the total four period. Three factors were related to employment success or non-success:

1. Receipt of postsecondary training: Clients who were success-

fully employed were less frequently involved in postsecondary training, while clients who were unsuccessful were often involved in rehabilitation or sheltered training. Clients whose employment success fluctuated were often involved in life skills or personal development programs.

2. Possession of a driver's license: Clients who had a driver's license were more frequently successfully employed.

3. Involvement in leisure activities: Clients who were successfully employed usually reported higher levels of social activities and personal interests or hobbies.

During the four years reviewed, a total of 114 job placements were made, of which 55.2 percent were considered successful. Success of job placement was significantly related to means by which the job was found, with a greater proportion of the jobs found by clients themselves being unsuccessful. Placements made through the Y.M.C.A. Employment Program or other sources were more likely to be successful, and the Y.M.C.A. was directly involved in just over one half of the successful job placements found.

Implications and suggestions for further research involved assessing other factors related to employment success, such as employers' attitudes, and developing more individualized school programs to meet personal needs for each student.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The right to work: to some this concept may seem almost paradoxical. They might suggest that work represents an obligation or a necessity, but scarcely constitutes a desirable "right." Yet, in this decade of ever-increasing unemployment and concern for greater individual and national productivity, the importance of gainful employment for all citizens has rapidly become a primary political and social concern. The pervasiveness of this work ethic, in fact, is represented even in our manner of speech and address. Think for a moment of your likely response, should I ask "What is your friend John?". In all probability your reply would be "John is an engineer," or "a teacher," or "a laborer." Depending on the circumstances, of course, your reply might be different: "John is mentally retarded."

The issue, albeit dramatized, represents a real concern. Our society tends to equate our identity and worth as individuals with the roles which we assume as workers. The mentally retarded individual has historically been considered unemployable and therefore an unproductive member of society. Confined to institutions and denied access to education, training and community contacts, the retarded did indeed represent a considerable social burden. A marked change in attitude and approach to the problem of retardation, however, was evidenced in the late 1960's and early 1970's, and perhaps is best characterized

in the concept of normalization (Wolfensberger, 1972), which gained popular acceptance throughout this country's human service institutions at that time.

Wolfensberger, a psychologist and researcher in the field of mental retardation, borrowed the normalization concept from Scandinavian research and adapted it to the North American culture, defining it as: "Utilization of means which are as culturally normative as possible, in order to establish and/or maintain personal behaviors which are as culturally normative as possible" (Wolfensberger, 1972, p. 28). In other words, normalization for mentally retarded individuals would imply that they be given a life style which approximated that of "normal" persons in every possible way, to the extent of their ability to cope with this life style. The implications of such a principle were astounding: the mentally retarded individual should have access to formal education in community schools; they should reside within their community in a family-home environment; they should be permitted to engage in productive employment within the competitive work force and at the established rate of pay.

As one begins to examine the total implications of the normalization concept it becomes increasingly apparent that individual limitations can severely restrict the extent to which a retarded individual can live under "normal" circumstances, particularly if he or she is severely or profoundly retarded. The concept obviously

must be tempered with a realistic assessment of what is possible for that person. The mildly retarded (mentally handicapped) individual, however, may be entirely capable of assimilation into a normal community life style when provided with necessary support systems and appropriate innovations.

The YMCA Employment Program can be viewed as one such support service for the mildly retarded or mentally handicapped young adult who is attempting to adjust to a normative societal role, specifically within the world of work. This program was created in May of 1972, through the cooperation of the Government of the Province of Alberta and the Edmonton Public School Board. The program was initially established to provide job-placement and follow-up services to students leaving L. Y. Cairns School, a vocational public school for children with definite intellectual limitations. Other public schools and the Edmonton Separate School Board became involved about one year later.

The Employment Program was designed to provide one individual (placement officer) to act as an advocate and liaison between the mentally handicapped client and the employer. The placement officer's role was to contact a variety of possible employers, describe the clients' abilities and limitations, accompany clients on job interviews and visit them and their supervisors on the job site in order to alleviate any post-employment difficulties. Since its initial inception the YMCA Employment Program has changed somewhat, adding other

components or services, and incorporating a variety of schools and community agencies as referral sources for mentally handicapped clients. The essential program component, however, has remained intact, and appears to adequately serve the employment needs of mentally handicapped young adults in the Edmonton area.

Purpose of the Study

The YMCA Employment Program, through annual reports and monthly statistics summaries, has repeatedly established its ability to place mentally handicapped young adults into competitive employment in Edmonton, Alberta. To date, however, no systematic review has been conducted of client activities for durations of longer than one year at a time. Also, while there is considerable literature available in the United States describing incorporation of the mentally handicapped into the work force (Chaffin et al, 1971; Brolin and Kokaska, 1974; Collister, 1975) very little Canadian research has been published on this subject. The Employment Program is unique from others described in much of the American literature, since it is not affiliated directly with only one particular school or institution in the sense of an in-house or built-in employment program for a rehabilitation center. It is, instead, physically separate from its referral sources which represent a variety of schools and community agencies, and it is operated by a private, community organization with government funding rather than through the auspices of a government administered rehabilitation or social services program. It would seem useful,

therefore, to conduct a long-term review of the Employment Program as a facilitator to the normalization of mentally handicapped young adults in the Edmonton area.

The present study was designed to conduct a descriptive follow-up review of the YMCA Employment Program clients over a four-year span after their initial introduction to the program in 1974. Investigations to be conducted in the course of this study included:

1) To assess the appropriateness of a mail-out questionnaire survey as a research method for long term follow-up of mentally handicapped clients.

2) To determine the ratio of successful placements (the number of students who have been incorporated into the work force) and to assess the rate of ongoing employment success of the YMCA clients over a four-year period.

3) To assess the relationship between the clients' educational background and the type of work which they obtain. That is, whether they are employed in jobs which are directly related to their vocational studies at school, or their work experience placements.

4) To identify any factors (such as referral source, social activity, multiple handicaps, etc.) which differentiate effectively between successful and non-successful clients.

5) To provide feedback to referring schools on findings in the above areas for the purpose of identifying possible curriculum changes. Knowledge of job opportunities, client characteristics and successes

experienced may hold relevant implications for changes in program emphasis, course materials, teaching styles or alternative programs available to students.

Methods and Procedures

Data were collected in the format of a descriptive survey of all clients who were referred to the YMCA Employment Program in 1974. A survey questionnaire was designed, assessed and revised, and mailed to each client in the sample. Clients with unreturned questionnaires were followed up with a telephone call by the examiner and, where necessary, a personal interview was conducted with the client in order to provide assistance with questionnaire completion.

Clients' responses to the survey questions were cross-referenced with information from their personal files, as well as monthly statistics reports, to ensure accuracy and completeness of their replies.

Definitions

Terms which were used throughout this study and which may be confusing or new to the reader are defined below. It should be noted that these definitions are tendered for the purpose of this study only, and they may vary considerably from meanings assigned to the same terms in other sources.

Mentally Handicapped. Those persons who, because of intellectual limitations, were viewed as requiring special placement assistance in order to be successfully employed. (Their overall intellectual ability generally falling within the borderline to dull normal

range of functioning ability.)

Successful Employment. Total number of days in which the client is employed (includes competitive work, educational programs and housewives) during the calendar year equals at least 6 months (130 days).

Successful Placement. A client is hired to work in the competitive labour market at any job which he or she holds for three or more consecutive months.

Work Experience. Placement from an educational or training institution into an actual employment setting in order to practice job skills. Work experience placements could vary in duration from three weeks of full time attendance on the job, to four months of half-days or partial weeks.

Limitations of the Study

Due to the questionnaire-survey method of data collection employed in this study, it suffers from certain inherent limitations which must be considered. The most critical of these is the response mortality for mail-out questionnaire research. This was particularly relevant for the present study since, over the four year span of the follow-up many clients had moved and lost touch with the employment program, making them impossible to contact. Efforts were made to reduce this effect by conducting follow-up telephone calls and personal interviews with clients who did not return the mailed questionnaire. A second design limitation was that of client motivation and recall for

complete and accurate responses. The intellectual limitations of the clients compounded this concern even further, due to low reading levels and poor memory skills. Again, an attempt was made to alleviate these difficulties by simplifying the reading level and design of the questionnaire through consultation and review by experts in the field as well as administration to a small sample group, by providing individual assistance for clients experiencing difficulties, and by cross-referencing clients' responses with file and statistics reports for accuracy checks.

The study, having been set up as a descriptive survey of YMCA Employment Program clients, should not be considered in an evaluative sense. No control groups were established for comparative or assessment purposes, therefore the results of this study can only be interpreted as a statement of the experienced success or lack thereof for those clients referred to the program in 1974 who responded to the questionnaire. Also, since the YMCA Employment Program is restricted to the greater Edmonton vicinity, findings from this research are directly applicable only to the placement of mentally handicapped young adults within this vicinity.

Organization of the Thesis

Following the introduction of the nature and purpose of the thesis in Chapter I, a review of related literature was presented in Chapter II, describing various considerations and experiences in the vocational placement of the mentally handicapped or retarded. Chapter III

constituted a more detailed description of the YMCA Employment Program, its history and method of operation. In Chapter IV the design of the study was outlined, with details of subject selection, instrument preparation, and techniques of data collection and analysis. The information gathered from questionnaires, files, statistics reports and individual contacts was compiled and presented in Chapter V. Finally, a summary of findings, considerations to be drawn from these, and implications for further research have been presented in Chapter VI.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Attitudes to the Mentally Handicapped

Societal attitudes toward the mentally handicapped have historically fluctuated in an almost cyclical fashion. The pervasive view of a mentally handicapped person as being different or deviant led to a variety of treatment approaches, depending on the social climate and attitudes of the particular era. In 1722, for example, Connecticut's first house of correction included rogues, vagabonds, drunkards, prostitutes, pilferers, brawlers, and the mentally afflicted. This arrangement reflected the underlying belief that the mentally handicapped individual functioned as a menace to society and a burden on charity. Such persons were typically subjected to segregation, control and minimal levels of subsistence or support.

In the early 19th century however, a change in the prevailing attitudes towards many oppressed groups--slaves, prisoners, the insane, blind and deaf--saw the development of a sudden interest in "mental defectives." New approaches and views were advanced by enthusiastic young educators and researchers, first in France and Switzerland and then throughout Europe and to the United States and Canada. In Switzerland, Johann Jacob Guggenbuhl established the Abendberg center in 1840, for the teaching and medical treatment of mentally retarded people. An all-out effort was made to build up the

patients with pure mountain air, good wholesome diet, some medication, and an intensive education and training program to develop the sensory perceptions. Guggenbuhl tried to "awaken the souls" of his patients through "habituation to regular routine, memory exercises and speech training" (c.f. N.I.M.R. manual).

Edward Seguin, a French medical student, attempted to educate an "idiotic boy." After a rigorous 18 months of training he found the boy "was able to make better use of his senses, could remember and compare, speak, write, count" (N.I.M.R. manual). Seguin began to treat more "incurable" children in a Paris hospital. By 1844 his results prompted the Paris Academy of Sciences to declare that Seguin had solved the problem of idiot education. Political upheaval in 1848, however, forced Seguin to flee to the United States where he acted as a consultant for residential and training facilities for mentally retarded children.

Another individual whose activities fostered institution care and training for retarded children in North America was Samuel Gridley Howe. Initially concerned with the needs of blind and deaf children, Howe, in 1848, issued an eloquent appeal to the Massachusetts House of Representatives, asking for support of public education for the handicapped. By 1875 there were 25 state schools in U.S.A. serving 15,000 students who were often subdivided into training categories based on ability and expectations, "school proper," "industrial section," and "asylum" (Kahlmann, 1875). Canada's first centre for

mentally handicapped persons was briefly operated from 1859 in Orilla, Ontario as a branch of the provincial lunatic asylum. It was closed due to disrepair but, in 1876, was reconditioned and reopened as Canada's first hospital training school for mentally retarded children, the "Orilla Hospital for Idiots and Imbeciles."

This period of service provision characterized an era which viewed the mentally handicapped as developing persons--individuals possessing potential for growth, development and learning. In spite of the progressive and hopeful nature of this approach, however, problems were encountered which saw the evolution of yet another concept of mental retardation. Problems of limited resources beyond training, over-expectations for "cures" of intellectual limitations and the inclusion of progressively more severely handicapped residents led to a gradual change in attitude through 1870 and 1880. Developmental attitudes degenerated into those of pity and charity, and the nature of services provided by society changed with them. The term "school" began to disappear from the names of centers, to be replaced by the term "asylum." As a constructive substitute for educational activities increased, emphasis was placed on the retarded person working. "With their daily tasks, their feeble minds directed, the time taken up in work or exercise, their days are spent in safety, pleasantness and peace" (Kerlin, 1886). This work ethic took a vicious turn in later years whereby capable residents were locked into an institutional system in which their 'free' labour was indispensable

to the continued existence and functioning of the institution.

Along with the already-mentioned economic pitfalls, the protective residential care model bore with it the dangerous trends of isolation and enlargement. The removal and segregation of mentally handicapped individuals as a homogeneous deviant group developed almost concomitant to Sir Francis Galton's (1883) science of genetics.

Galton's model introduced the role of heredity and familial influence as determining factors in the origin and effects of mental retardation. With this relationship established, a logical conclusion for reducing the prevalence of mental retardation was the prevention of reproduction by individuals of lower intelligence. Society now isolated, sequestered and sterilized the mentally retarded, for its own protection and perceived best interests rather than in the interests of the retarded individual. We saw, again, a return to the views of the late 1700's--the retarded individual was considered a menace and a burden to society and now had even been designated as a subhuman organism, possessing less than full humanity and rights.

This attitude predominated largely throughout the first half of the twentieth century with little development or change. In the 1960's however, a reassessment and reaction began to formulate. Wolfensberger (1969) stated a challenge: "I propose that essentially, many of our institutions, to this very day, operate in the spirit of 1925 when inexpensive segregation of a scarcely human retardate was seen as the only feasible alternative to combat a social menace. I am not

proposing that this view is still held; I am proposing that most institutions function as if this view were still held." Wolfensberger had an alternative to offer, that of Normalization. This concept, based on the literature from Scandinavian countries was defined as: "Utilization of means, which are as culturally normative as possible, in order to establish and/or maintain personal behaviors and characteristics which are as culturally normative as possible" (Wolfensberger, 1972). The normalization principle coincided with a thrust toward growth of parent movements and organized associations. Also, a revival of the developmental approach to the retarded resulted from the knowledge gained in the rehabilitation and special education thrusts of the 40's and 50's. Even the spiraling costs of large institutions and the need for economization began to dictate the need for decentralization and individualized services for the mentally handicapped. The persistent and strongly held beliefs of the menace period, however, were deeply engrained. Community services capable of providing viable alternatives were slow to develop. Societal beliefs and misconceptions were difficult to alter. The challenge of the 1970's became, more than ever, the coordination of all facets of the mentally handicapped person's life. He was to be provided, to the fullest extent of his ability, with the same opportunities, rights and style of living as any other human being.

"Normalizing" Services for the Mentally Handicapped

The concept of normalization received widespread acceptance and implementation in Canada as well as the United States (N.I.M.R., 1974). Implicit in the normalization theory were a number of undeniable rights to which the mentally handicapped were entitled. Just as any other citizen, the mentally handicapped must be accorded the right to live, be educated, work, vote, contract, marry, parent, use the courts or obtain a driver's license. On closer evaluation, however, it would appear that many of these rights were being accorded only superficially. Actual practice, it seems, frequently reflected a still-prevalent tendency to discriminate against and deny the mentally handicapped person the basic requirements for a "normal" life style. Two areas which are most relevant to this project: the right to education and the right to work, were examined from a political/legal viewpoint to assess the degree to which they are available to the mentally handicapped.

The Alberta Legislature, through the Alberta School Act (1970) section 134 (a) stated:

> A board may temporarily excuse from attendance in a regular classroom any pupil whose special educational needs, in the opinion of an inspector or superintendent, are of such a nature that regular classroom experience is not productive or is detrimental to the pupil or to the school, until such time as the board, with the approval of the parent, can arrange the needed special education through attendance in a special class or by entering the child in a special school or in any other suitable manner. (p. 67)

The effect of this act was, in many cases, the exclusion of handicapped pupils from public school classrooms, often on a permanent basis. It was not until 1978 that the educational rights of handicapped children became a real issue of concern in the Province of Alberta. Two events were most instrumental in bringing this issue into public view. On March 14, 1978, Mr. Gordon Stromberg, MLA for Camrose, proposed in a motion to the Alberta Legislature:

> Be it resolved, that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta in this year of the child, urge the government to reaffirm its respect for human rights and its commitment to strive for equality of opportunity for all people by supporting the principle that no child is ineducable.
>
> Be it further resolved, that this Assembly urge the establishment of a committee, whose membership shall include Members of the Legislative Assembly, professionals in the education field, representatives of volunteer organizations and members of the public, which shall receive the mandate of this Assembly to recommend just and practical means through which to provide quality education to <u>all</u> Alberta's children. (Alberta Hansard, March, 1978, p. 189)

On August 15, 1978, a precedent-setting case was heard in the Edmonton District of the Alberta Supreme Court. The case involved Shelly Carriere, a ten year old girl who was not considered mentally handicapped, but did have cerebral palsy and experienced considerable learning difficulties. Shelly was suspended from school in her home county of Lamont, and had been excluded from a program at the Edmonton Glenrose Hospital. In the case of "Carriere and the County

of Lamont No. 30, 1978," it was argued that The School Act required the county to either enrol Shelly in one of its own classes or provide (pay costs for) enrollment in an appropriate program in another district. Mr. Justice O'Byrne, who heard the case, directed the county of Lamont to enrol Shelly immediately and pay all costs involved.

In the United States, parents of handicapped children were already seeking to establish legal precedents for mandatory education in the early 1970's. By 1972, almost 70% of the states had passed some type of mandatory education legislation (Judkins, 1978). In 1975, Public Law (P.L.) 94-142: The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, was enacted. P.L. 94-142 stated that, "Every handicapped child be provided a free appropriate public education at no additional cost to that child's parents or guardians."

It would appear, then, that in both Canada and the United States the stage has been set for a realization of educational rights for mentally handicapped children. But are legislative changes adequate? A year after Mr. Justice O'Byrne's ruling in the Carriere vs. County of Lamont case, Shelly Carriere was still not enrolled in any public educational program deemed appropriate (by her parents). Clearly, the ultimate value of such legislative changes must be gauged by the effectiveness of their implementation. Without the general acceptance and understanding of the public, parents and educators, such laws serve merely as a superficial balm to the nation's conscience, without effecting any real changes in the state of educational provisions for the

mentally handicapped.

Provisions for vocational and employment opportunities, as a logical consequence to educational training, are subject to the same pitfalls.

In the United States, in November 1976, The President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped sponsored a national forum "to define more clearly and offer recommendations for resolving the many problems and issues presently confronting the job preparation and placement of handicapped persons" (Bellamy and Clark, 1977). The very need for such an assessment implied the ineffectiveness of mere legislative changes in serving the needs and rights of the mentally handicapped. Wolfensberger (1974) expressed the same concerns, indicating that too much reliance is placed on laws to accomplish social goals. He advocated placing less emphasis on technology and methodology in human services, and concentrating more on ideology, values and morality. Yet the interventions which he proposed for achieving this ideology could be subjected to the same criticism. Identification of a primary responsible office or agency, provision of backup specialty services, development of citizen advocacy and watchdog committees are all basically programs and methodologies which underly the ideology of normalization and integration.

Wolfensberger's comparison of normalization theory with the 'mainstreaming' trends in the American educational system illustrates one of the underlying difficulties in implementation of his theory. He

stated "Mainstreaming is either all or nothing. Either you're segregated or 'mainstreamed'. Normalization sees a continuum" (Wolfensberger, 1974). In normalization, he said, integration should be "as much as possible" and should be "adaptive and successful." The difficulty obviously arises of determining, first, how much integration is possible, and, second, what degree of integration will prove most successful and adaptive for any individual. In order to answer these questions we must be able to identify both the major difficulties which are encountered and the factors which are conducive to successful educational and vocational integration of the mentally handicapped.

Difficulties Encountered in Service Provision

Considerable disagreement on both ideology and intervention techniques is evident throughout the research literature on normalization and employment of the mentally handicapped. Even the basic philosophical issue of providing integrated versus non-integrated programs for the mentally handicapped is still subject to contention.

Olshansky (1969) advocated avoidance of all segregation of the mentally handicapped in both schools and workshops, to the extent of even recommending that mentally handicapped persons be encouraged to "pass" when seeking employment (that is, to avoid disclosure of their intellectual limitations to prospective employers). He felt that segregation and labeling resulted in depressed expectations of the mentally handicapped, and therefore limited their capacity and

opportunity to perform.

Cegelka (1977) examined eleven programs providing vocational education to the mentally handicapped in the United States. Both integrated and segregated service delivery models were represented, yet her review was purely descriptive, with no attempts made to identify the comparative merits of either system.

Collister (1975) compared two groups of mentally handicapped graduates, one from a special school and one from a mainstream school, to determine the benefits of each program. Interviews were conducted one and two years after graduation to measure differences in employment skill levels, unemployment rates, job satisfaction, income level and other variables. His data suggested that there was little difference in long range characteristics for either group, with only a very slight trend towards more positive ratings for graduates of the mainstream school.

Conway (1976) vehemently predicted the failure of current attempts at integration or normalization of the mentally handicapped. The major issue, which he felt had been totally ignored by proponents of the normalization theory, was that of sexualization. While society may support and even encourage integrated employment and education, he said, the influence of early 20th century genetic research in mental handicaps continues to preclude the acceptance of the mentally handicapped as totally integrated citizens.

After Galton's development of the science of genetics, and the

subsequent sensationalistic and well known stories of the Juke and Kallikak families, society had, indeed, insisted on the segregation and sterilization of the mentally handicapped. Yet, since that time, research findings had absolutely disputed the concepts of heredity as sole determinant of a child's intelligence and the idea of the IQ as being a stable measure (Sattler, 1974; Skodak, 1968).

Of the IQ score, Sattler (1974) stated: "In evaluating the constancy of the IQ, one must consider the issues of prediction and regularity of intellectual development. Prediction is good for short periods of time and for older children. However, the IQ fails in providing a stable index of development, because large shifts can occur over an extended time interval. Intelligence is a developmental concept" (p. 23).

Marie Skodak, at the 1968 Annual Conference of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, described her research proving the relatedness between environment and severe retardation. She was presented the President Kennedy award for her contribution to the field of mental retardation. The following is her own summary of those findings:

> Those children who were retarded as infants and those infants whose mothers were known to be retarded but who either through a planned intervention program, or through early adoptive placement, enjoyed a highly stimulating environment and a warm, affectional relationship with a specific parent or parent substitute, attained normal intelligence by school age. As adults their education and vocational status is

> average or higher than average. Those children, on the other hand, who began life with normal intelligence but suffered a neglected and barren existence, with an absence of a close tie to a adult who loved them, and cared about them showed a significant, permanent deterioration intelligence, which at some point became irreversible.
>
> It appears that even within any limits which are set by constitutional or genetic endowment, the influence of environmental experience can be so great as to cover the range from profound mental defect to intellectual giftedness. Since these environmental factors are within the control of man, and at least some of their elements are known, some inferences can be drawn for remediation and prevention. Hope is extended to that large sector of retardation where deficits are associated, not with structural anomalies, but with emotional and cultural deprivation.

With this positive focus for training and skill development in the mentally handicapped, one would expect considerable innovations in vocational education and employment opportunities. Yet, even here, differences of focus complicate the issue of service provision. One basic disagreement is in the area of just what to teach the mentally handicapped. Do they require training in specific skills for particular job settings, or should training programs emphasize primarily general social skills and work habits? Brolin and Kakaska (1974) stated:

> The person should leave the training process with a specific vocational skill. General work skills can be gained concurrent with specific skill training. Specific skill training greatly elevates self-confidence and is a definite selling point to an employer who may be concerned

> with the individual's ability to master vocational competencies. (p. 176)

Brown, in a chapter on Vocational Training and the Mentally Handicapped (Das and Baine, 1978), supported the opposing view. He indicated that specific skills training for the mentally handicapped led to poor transfer of abilities, and subsequent difficulties when they were placed in unstructured situations or jobs requiring temporal judgments or variations of performance. He felt that vocational training must provide the individual with experience in unstructured and varying situations, including social skills training, in order to allow for maximum transfer of learned skills.

Perhaps an even more critical subject of dissent is in the ultimate utilization of the mentally handicapped as employees. Many researchers insist that greater diversity and challenge in job types is needed (Bellamy, Peterson and Close, 1975; Brolin, Durand, Kromer and Muller, 1975; Trybus and Lacks, 1972), yet others (Farrall, 1970; Kohn, 1977); the business community; and even national associations for the mentally handicapped, continue to emphasize the value of and need for employing the mentally handicapped in repetitive, low skill-level positions.

Bellamy, Peterson and Close (1975) duplicated previous findings that even severely and profoundly retarded adults could learn a variety of complex assembly tasks under proper environmental conditions such as detailed task analysis and appropriate reinforcement contin-

gencies. Similar techniques were described as successful by Trybus and Lacks (1972), with vocational training of behavior-problem mentally handicapped. Brolin and Kokaska (1974), insisted that our society consistently underestimated the abilities of retarded persons, and sited European countries as far advanced in demonstrating that mentally handicapped workers could operate intricate machinery and cope with other demanding jobs. They recommended closer liaisons between educational, vocational, and employment services in order to achieve a broader range of vocational placements.

The opposite viewpoint, of maintaining the mentally handicapped in low-level or repetitive jobs, appears to be based largely on economic considerations and historical expectations. Farrall (1970), in describing the Australian Commonwealth Employment Service, described these expectations succinctly:

> It must be clearly understood that employers seeking labour are principally concerned with efficient performance, reliability and a capacity to be trained in the required productive skills of the job.... If you were an employer, you would want from your workers, loyality, dependability, good work habits, productivity, interest in doing the job--and no trouble making. (p. 28)

The Dallas National Association for Retarded Citizens (1977) perpetuated this same 'list of virtues' approach to hiring the mentally handicapped, stating:

> Figures consistently show that mentally retarded individuals are highly motivated and willing to work. They rate high in reliability, loyalty,

> accuracy and job satisfaction--and they rate a great deal lower than most employees in tardiness, absenteeism and job-hopping.
>
> ... Absenteeism, unreliability and rapid turnover rates in "non-status" positions are very real problems in business and industry. The mentally retarded worker offers valid solutions to these problems by turning the negative aspects of such jobs into pluses. The relatively routine nature of these tasks is often ideally suited to his/her needs and abilities.

Kohn (1977), in examining the problem of worker alienation, also discussed the value of placing mentally handicapped workers into boring or routine positions. His suggestions for reducing worker alienation included: a) expanding or rotating jobs for meaningfulness; b) encouraging worker participation in decision-making; c) utilizing management by objectives techniques; and d) properly matching people to jobs. Yet, it was only the last category that he considered appropriate to the employment of the mentally handicapped.

These rather simplistic approaches to the mentally handicapped as contented, mechanistic production devices are obviously unrealistic. The mentally handicapped, as any other workers, are subject to emotional changes, personal preferences, and need for stimulation. How, then, does one enhance the employability of such persons when they are also limited by intellectual, skill, and social deficiencies? Perhaps the best answer to this question could be obtained by examining research on a variety of vocational training and job placement programs and identifying those factors which were deemed

critical to the employment success of the mentally handicapped subjects.

Factors Determining Successful Employment

Work Experience. Probably the most consistently significant factor related to employment success of the mentally handicapped is that of practical work experience prior to job placement. Work experience programs were initiated in the 1960's, and were considered a marked improvement over exclusively academically-oriented curriculum toward providing better vocational outcomes for mentally handicapped students (Brolin, 1977).

The majority of the research reviewed in this area supported the notion that graduates of work experience programs experienced significantly or slightly higher rates of employment success (Brolin, Durand, Kromer and Muller, 1975; Dinger, Myers, and Berner, 1973; Stahlecker and Thomas, 1967).

Howe (1968), while supporting the overall value of work-experience training, investigated the relative merits of on-campus versus off-campus programs. His results indicated that students without off-campus work experience were achieving as well as those who had been placed in work situations in the community as part of their high school program. Howe concluded that work experience coordinators might use their available time and resources more efficiently by emphasizing the on-campus phase of work experience programs.

One study which compared mentally handicapped students from a work experience program with a control sample from neighboring school districts failed to demonstrate significant differences in overall employment of graduates (Chaffin, Spellman, Regan and Davidson, 1971). The results indicated that most of these mentally handicapped students would be employed in the competitive labor market without the benefit of a work experience program. A positive tendency was noted, however, for students of the work experience program to graduate more often, hold their jobs longer, and earn more money than students of the comparison group. The authors concluded that the goal of work experience programs is not to make the students employable, rather it is to enhance the employability which already exists for most of the students in the program.

Sex. Of approximately ten studies which investigated a number of variables and their relationship to the employability of the mentally handicapped, only two were found which identified the subjects' sex as a relevant factor. Brolin, Durand, Kromer and Muller (1975) compared a number of variables such as sex, age, IQ, marital status and educational background with measures of vocational adjustment and type of program received (work experience or academic). The only significantly related variable (.05 level) was sex. Proportionately more females than males had been in the work study program and had higher levels of vocational adjustment.

Fulton (1975) compared a similar list of variables to a measure

of clients' employment success (as defined by employment in the initial placement for six months or longer). The only variable which showed a statistically significant difference for employment success was presence of a secondary emotional disability. However, a non-significant but positive trend was evident for male clients to be more successful than female clients.

The general lack of significance of this factor in most of the studies reviewed would indicate that some intervening factors, and not the clients' sex were likely responsible for the results observed.

Driver Education. As with the previous factor, there was little evidence in the research which identified driver education as a significant variable for employment success. However, the one study which did report this factor (Dinger, Myers, and Berner, 1973), indicated that it was highly important in its relationship to post-school employment success. It seems highly plausible that this variable, unlike sex, has rarely been investigated in studies of employment success, and that further research would be warranted to determine the actual degree to which it is significant.

Trained Staff. A number of studies focused on the need for improved training programs to provide better equipped, qualified staff to work with the mentally handicapped. Wolfensberger (1974) identified the lack of high-level, skilled, committed and ideologized leadership as the biggest single need in human services. Brolin (1977) stated that intense instructional periods with highly organized,

structured programs were critical to the mentally handicapped's success as workers, and that "competent humanistic teachers using modern technology and methodology within this structure were required. Weisenstein (1977) criticized the gaps in service provision by vocational and special educators, indicating that neither group had fully accepted the challenge of providing vocational education to the mentally handicapped, and advocating more cooperation and collaboration between these disciplines. Cegelka (1977), in a review of eleven career development programs for the mentally handicapped, identified the dearth of training programs for personnel as one reason for the limited potential realized in vocational education of the mentally handicapped.

In all of the above literature, however, the need for more and better staff training is only hypothesized, based on the authors' own impressions and convictions. No research was found which actually analyzed the comparative effectiveness of trained versus untrained staff, or the relative merits and value of those training programs presently being implemented. In fact, much dissention still appears to exist regarding which factors are most significant for integrating the mentally handicapped into the community. Until these issues have been better clarified it would appear rather premature to implement very extensive staff training programs.

Emotional/Social Factors. In one study reviewed (Fulton, 1975), the presence of a secondary emotional disability was found to be the only significantly differentiating variable for non-successful versus successful employment of the mentally handicapped. Other researchers (Brolin and Kokaska, 1974; Brown, 1979; Trybus and Lacks, 1972) indicated that the mentally handicapped often lost their jobs because of personal-social factors, but the authors did not provide definitive empirical support for this claim. The lack of statistical evidence for this relationship can probably be attributed to the difficulty of, first, operationalizing definitions of emotional disturbance and, second, asking employers to identify underlying causes for poor job performance.

Training programs which were recommended to reduce the effect of emotional disturbance included behavioral programs utilizing a wide variety of operant techniques such as token reinforcement, cueing lights and punishment (Trybus and Lacks, 1972); Leisure Education programs emphasizing personal development and use of integrated recreation facilities (Day and Day, 1977; Hutchison and Lord, 1974); and Career Education/Counselling programs which focus on personal, social development as well as specific job skills training (Brolin and Kokaska, 1974; Brolin, Durand, Kromer and Muller, 1975; Cegelka, 1977; and D'Alonzo, 1977).

Assessment. As might be expected, only two of the authors surveyed reported noteworthy findings from using IQ scores as

variables related to employment placement success. Stahlecker and Thomas (1967) found that students in the high borderline range of scores were significantly more successful at finding jobs than those with scores in the middle-borderline range. Howe (1968), found no significant differences between jobs found for two groups of mentally handicapped (with and without off-campus work experience), but noted a slight tendency for greater unemployment for subjects who were multiple handicapped or tested near the bottom of the group in IQ.

Olshansky (1969) expressed what appeared to be a more common attitude of the researchers reviewed. That is, that IQ scores alone are of limited value in assessing or predicting job performance of the mentally handicapped, because they are specific to a particular situation at a given time and often do not adequately reflect training potentials. Also, because of the restricted range of IQ scores being considered in research dealing specifically with the mentally handicapped, limitations in observed differences within the population would be expected. Olshansky and others (Brolin and Kokaska, 1974; Hollender, 1974; and Phelps, 1969) recommended replacing traditional IQ assessments with other forms of evaluation. Particular emphasis was placed on evaluation of specific skills and interests demonstrated throughout the training experiences as a basis for placement decisions. Hollender (1974) and Phelps (1969) reported that staff perceptions and ratings of their mentally handicapped clients appeared most successful in differentiating future success.

Bellamy, Peterson and Close (1975) advocated the need for development of reliable simultaneous measures of vocational, personal and social behaviors which are maintained in the work setting. Carbuhn and Wells (1973), described a specially-developed assessment device, the Nonreading Aptitude Test Battery (NATB), which may be useful in predicting employment success of mentally handicapped clients. Their research established the concurrent validity of NATB factors which significantly differentiated successful versus unsuccessful workers as rated by the on-the-job training supervisors.

Even with the development of special assessment devices, difficulties may be encountered in adequately identifying the abilities, interests and potentials of the mentally handicapped. Brolin and Kokaska (1974) considered it extremely difficult to accurately assess the skills of the mentally handicapped because of limited self concept, self expression and range of experiences, as well as their expectancy of failure and difficulty following oral and written directions.

In view of such possible limitations, Brolin and Kokaska recommended that the evaluation process should include a heavy component of adjustment and training experiences, and should allow sufficient time for a number of re-evaluations as the client progressed. Standardized testing was considered only a small component of the evaluation process, to be used cautiously. The use of counseling in conjunction with meaningful training experiences was strongly advocated as a means to enhance behavior repertoires which would

permit accurate evaluation and job placement.

Career Education and Counseling. The concept of career education and counseling described by Brolin and Kokaska in 1974 appears to have become more and more a focal issue in adequate job preparation of the mentally handicapped.

Later studies (Brolin, Durand, Kromer and Muller, 1975; Brolin, 1977; Cegelka, 1977; and D'Alonzo, 1977) increasingly emphasized the need for career education programs which focused on the emotional, social and personal needs of the mentally handicapped, as well as providing them with specific, marketable job skills.

Some of the necessary components for a successful Career Education program were first described by Brolin, Durand, Kromer and Muller (1975) as a means to alleviate the many vocational adjustment problems which the mentally handicapped seemed to encounter during the first few years after leaving school. The authors recommended including career education components which emphasized daily living skills, occupational guidance and preparation and personal-social skills. Brolin, in 1977, reiterated and expanded on these recommendations. He described career education as "... a total educational concept for systematically coordinating all school, family, and community components to facilitate each individual's potential for economic, social, and personal fulfillment" (p. 155), and indicated that it must begin with early childhood education and continue throughout the adult years. Brolin suggested that greater emphasis be placed

on occupational guidance, response to individual student's needs, and relevance of subject materials to future career possibilities. He envisioned the career education process as a 'life-centered' approach which incorporated suitable employment as only one of the important components of a person's career. Educational practices which he considered necessary for successful career education included: teaching all subjects in relation to their career implications; providing more 'hands-on' experiences for skill development; involving the total community, parents and business establishments as much as possible; and emphasizing training of personal-social skills such as self-awareness, human relations, decision making and independence.

D'Alonzo (1977) identified essentially the same program components for successful career education as those listed above, but incorporated some more specific suggestions. Included in these were basic academic skills, relevant personal work habits and values, job-hunting skills, and knowledge of continuing education opportunities. D'Alonzo also added a caution to career educators. He felt that the social-emotional and cognitive lag manifested by mentally handicapped individuals was not accommodated in the hierarchical structure of most traditional career education components. Career education, he emphasized, must be provided at the developmental level of the handicapped individual.

The need for responding to individual development and needs was also evident in many of the career development programs reviewed

and described by Cegelka (1977). While both integrated and segregated services were described (presumably for comparison), the most consistently significant factor for program success appeared to be provision of a wide range of program options to meet individual needs, and a great deal of flexibility regarding when and how a student progressed through the program.

Placement and Follow-up. Even with excellent career education, work experience, and other background requirements, the mentally handicapped client may be considered unsuccessful because of a negative answer to one simple question: "Can he get and keep a job?".

The ultimate measure of any educational or training program for the mentally handicapped still appears to be the employability of its graduates. How to enhance that employability beyond the training program is the concern of the placement service. In fact, most rehabilitation and training programs for the mentally handicapped now provide placement and follow-up assistance as part of the ongoing program (Das and Baine, 1978). The idea of an 'in-house' placement service is generally considered beneficial to the program for a number of reasons:

1) Placement staff can become involved with the client long before he goes to work, thus providing a familiar contact for the stressful change of work setting.

2) Pre-Employment counseling and preparation can be provided throughout the final stages of training, and may include visits to job

sites and even 'trial' employment placements.

3) The placement staff can provide feedback to improve the quality and relevance of training based on community needs.

4) The staff are familiar with the training offered, as well as the individual trainee and his needs.

Although placement and follow-up services appear to be considered an essential component of all training programs for the mentally handicapped, very little statistical evidence could be found regarding their effectiveness. One recent survey, conducted at the Vocational Rehabilitation and Research Institute in Calgary, Alberta, offered comparative statistics assessing the need for placement officers (Brown, 1978). This research indicated that, of those trainees placed by the staff of the Institute six months or earlier, well over 70 percent were still functioning effectively while only 40 percent of those who found their own jobs were still employed. An earlier study (Dinger, 1976) of four Special Education programs in Pennsylvania also showed significantly higher employment success for students who had received placement assistance from their school, compared with students who sought employment on their own.

While the value of placement and follow-up assistance appears universally accepted, there is still some controversy over just how much assistance is necessary, and what form it should take. Brolin and Kokaska (1974) described a number of approaches from direct involvement of the placement officer in initial employer contacts, job

interviews and follow-up visits; and a client-centered approach in which the mentally handicapped person relied totally on his or her own resources, in some cases even "passing" (not revealing their intellectual limitations or special education background) in a job interview. It would appear useful to examine actual placement procedures of various agencies in greater detail, to obtain a better understanding of which format and components have proven most useful, particularly in terms of long-range employment.

The present study examined one such placement and follow-up service--The Y. M. C. A. Employment Program. A detailed description of the programs rationale and method of operation was provided, coupled with a report of the employment histories of a sample group of clients over a four year follow-up period.

CHAPTER III

THE YMCA EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Origin of the Program

The YMCA Employment Program originated in May, 1972, as a result of concerns expressed by the principal and staff at L. Y. Cairns Vocational School. L. Y. Cairns had been established in 1969, to provide a vocationally-oriented education to students with limited intellectual capabilities, and was, at this time, preparing its first group of graduates for the final transition to community employment. Due to the unique nature of this program for the Edmonton area, however, there was limited knowledge available regarding successful employment placements for mentally handicapped youngsters. Concerns were voiced regarding how these students might find and secure employment; which employers or positions might provide suitable work opportunities, plus what type of follow-up support might be required beyond the school setting.

Through the cooperative efforts of L. Y. Cairns School, the Edmonton Public School Board, and the Government of the Province of Alberta, a program was implemented to assist the students with their transition from school to work. In order to provide a liaison between the educational and employment settings, a placement officer was hired to work with students preparing for employment. This person was to help the student with employer contacts, job search, interviews, and

post-employment concerns. The Young Men's Christian Association of Edmonton (YMCA) was able to provide the staff, supervision and community orientation necessary for such a position. As a result, the YMCA became involved as the service agency for provision of job placement assistance to the L. Y. Cairns students.

Within its first year of operation, the YMCA Employment Program was able to assist twenty-six L. Y. Cairns graduates in finding permanent employment. By this time a need was apparent for similar services to students of other vocational or trades programs in the Edmonton Public School System, and opportunity class students of the Edmonton Separate Schools. Various other community agencies had also begun to identify and refer clients to the program. With the feasibility of providing employment assistance through such a program apparently well established, the YMCA Employment Program was expanded to meet this increased need.

Referral Sources

By 1974, referrals to the YMCA Employment Program were being received from a large number of agencies, including public and separate schools, government social service and employment offices, and other rehabilitation and training programs. The largest single referral source continued to be the L. Y. Cairns school. A brief description follows of the services provided by this school and other common referral sources for the Employment Program.

L. Y. Cairns Vocational School. L. Y. Cairns school was first opened in 1969 by the Edmonton Public School Board to serve those students roughly classed as "Educably Mentally Retarded" in terms of ability.

The school's program evolved from an earlier public school program at Queen's Avenue school, and was designed to provide both academic and vocational training to its students, with a major emphasis on providing job-related skills. Vocational facilities housed within the school included modern, well equipped facilities for "on-the-job" training in areas such as food service, horticulture, custodial, woods and metals, sewing and homemaking, to mention only a few. Incorporated within the vocational training for senior students was a work-experience program involving three weeks of actual work duties in a "real" job setting either within the school or in the community.

St. Basil's School. The Edmonton Separate School Board first provided educational facilities for its mentally handicapped students through Pre Employment classes introduced by Father Fitzgerald. These later evolved to become the special "opportunity" classes provided through St. Basil's Separate School. No special vocational facilities were available in the school, but students frequently spent half days for up to three months working in community employment settings to gain vocational experience. Classroom activities generally focused on academic and social skills training.

Trades and Technical Programs. Occasionally students with special placement needs would be referred from other programs in W. P. Wagner, Jasper Place, or St. Joseph's High Schools in Edmonton. These trades programs usually concentrated on students in grades nine to eleven, and provided them with a more practical, vocationally oriented education, geared to direct employment or further training in a technical institute after graduation.

Other Referral Sources. Clients were also referred from Canada Manpower offices and Alberta or City Social Services if they required individualized placement and follow-up services. Other referrals were received from training centers such as the Goodwill-Rehabilitation Services and Hillside Apartments (an apartment complex which aided mentally handicapped adults in reintegrating to the community from an institution at Red Deer). Occasionally, clients or parents would make personal referrals for service after hearing about the program from other sources.

Method of Operation

During the period of January 1974 to December 1978, which constitutes the focus for this study, the YMCA Employment Program was designated primarily as a job placement and follow-up service. However, other program components were implemented at various times to enhance or expand the service provided. These will be described briefly at the end of this section.

Mentally handicapped young adults who required employment

assistance were generally referred to the YMCA employment program by their school or other community agencies, although they or their parents could contact the program directly. Each youngster, on referral, was assigned to a particular placement officer who was involved in all aspects of the service provided to them, so as to ensure continuity of service as well as to enhance the development of a supportive relationship between the placement officers and client. The placement officer's initial role was to gain as much relevant background information as possible about the client. Standard intake procedures included an interview or discussion with the client, a meeting and home visit with his parents, and contacts with his school teachers and counselors. Once appropriate types of work were identified, the placement officer began a search for employment opportunities in those areas.

Initial contacts with potential employers were generally made in person by the placement officer. The employer was given a description of the services available through the YMCA Employment Program, as well as the clients represented by it. Suitability of the jobs available was explored in discussions with interested employers as well as through tours of the actual work setting.

Job interviews were arranged for the client when appropriate positions were identified, and the placement officer generally accompanied the client on these, to lend support and assist in completing application forms if necessary. If requested, the placement officer

further assisted the employer in determining a job description, training program, salaries or hours of work. After the client had actually secured a permanent employment position, the placement officer continued to maintain contact in a supportive follow-up capacity. Follow-up usually entailed personal visits to the work site, initially every week to two weeks, to speak with both the client and employer. This served to facilitate the client's transition and adjustment to the work setting. Follow-up visits were gradually tapered off as their need dictated, but some form of supportive contact was maintained for a full year after job placement. Feedback regarding the client's adjustment to the work setting was provided to the school or referring agency on a regular basis.

Other Program Components

As the YMCA Employment Program expanded its services and experiences in job placement, it became increasingly apparent that employment could not be treated as an isolated factor in a mentally handicapped person's life. All too often, it seemed, employment successes would be overshadowed or sabotaged due to difficulties in the client's personal or social lives. Thus, in order to produce successful job placements, it was necessary to deal with the client's adjustment in all spheres: residential, economic, social, emotional, etc. To do this the program began to offer a variety of services and programs beyond those of a strictly placement and follow-up nature.

On an individual basis, placement officers became involved in

helping their clients find suitable accommodation, plan budgets and menus, apply for unemployment insurance, social assistance, and other government or community benefit programs. Recreational activities were encouraged and sometimes sponsored, as in the case of annual Christmas parties for all clients. Other supportive community services were sought out and used increasingly.

Occasionally it became apparent that already existing programs were unable to adequately serve the YMCA client population, due to space limitations or inability to incorporate the special needs of the mentally handicapped. Structured program components were therefore established and introduced to the Employment Program in 1977 and 1978 to fill these gaps in service. Pre-employment classes were offered to new clients in order to enhance their prerequisite skills for finding and holding down jobs. The classes were taught by placement officers and involved 5 mornings of instruction over the course of one week. Topics included: job search techniques, employer expectations, employment goals and interests, completing applications, resume writing and interview skills.

A second program, Leisure Education and Counseling, was initially introduced as a summer activity, in 1977, but proved so popular that it was continued on a permanent basis. The goal of this program was to orient the clients to a more constructive use of their leisure time. (This need having been identified due to concerns that, for many mentally handicapped persons, watching television seemed to

provide their sole recreational/social outlet outside of actual work hours.) The Leisure Education program was designed as an educational program, rather than as recreational or activity oriented. It emphasized teaching the clients about activities available to them and how to assess these, rather than going with the clients to actually engage in the activities. Sessions involved small group evening meetings of up to 10 clients. Group discussions, opportunities for interpersonal interactions and group exercises, were used to increase the clients' awareness of this current life style and constructive alternatives available to them. After they identified leisure options which interested them, clients were assisted in planning, budgeting for, and sampling activities in pairs or small groups. It was hoped that skills learned in this process would generalize to future needs for recreation and leisure activities. Also, personal contacts between clients in the group often provided the basis for friendships which endured beyond the program meetings. The clients, therefore, gained greater knowledge of what to do with their spare time and, at the same time, found someone to share the activity with them.

In summary, it appears that the YMCA Employment Program has not remained a static service since its inception in 1972. Rather, it has evolved and developed; expanding its services, and incorporating a variety of new program components to meet a greater need. The program emphasized treatment of the mentally handicapped as an "integrated whole" person with social and emotional needs as well as

employment concerns. Some attempt was made to assess the effect of this approach on clients' work adjustment. Unfortunately, the new program components were introduced just in the last year covered by this study, so there were very few clients from the sampled group who had participated in them. An interesting possibility for future research, however, would be to assess the effects of such supplementary programs on a clients' employment success. Often, clients with personal and social adjustment problems are referred for job placement to help them improve their adjustment. From the experiences of the YMCA Program it appears that often the reverse attitude may be required. Certainly the areas of intra- and interpersonal adjustment seem to be inextricably woven with employment success.

CHAPTER IV

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Research Format

A descriptive-survey research format was chosen for the study. Descriptive research, as described by Lehmann and Mehrens (1979) and as applied in this study, is primarily concerned with determining the nature and degree of existing conditions, and not with making predictions or drawing causal inferences. A mail-out questionnaire technique of data collection was used for increased ease in obtaining data from a relatively large sample group. Since most of the questions being asked were relatively straightforward, easy to comprehend, and generally required factual answers, a questionnaire format appeared appropriate. Also, use of a questionnaire rather than interview format was preferable in order to minimize the effects due to interviewer's characteristics, particularly since this researcher was closely involved with the Y.M.C.A. Employment Program during some of the time frame covered by this study.

The questionnaire-type survey was designed to obtain follow-up data on clients referred to the Y.M.C.A. employment program during the period of January to December, 1974. The survey attempted to elicit longitudinal information regarding clients' job placements and employment success over a four year period, from 1974 to 1978. Specific areas investigated, as stated in Chapter I, included:

1) To assess the appropriateness of a mail-out survey questionnaire as a research method for long-term follow-up of mentally handicapped clients.

2) To determine the ratio of successful placements (the number of students who have been incorporated into the work force) and to assess the rate of ongoing employment success of the Y.M.C.A. clients over a four year period.

3) To assess the relationship between the clients' educational background and the type of work which they obtain. That is, whether they are employed in jobs which are directly related to their vocational studies at school, or their work experience placements.

4) To identify any factors (such as referral source, social activity, multiple handicaps, etc.) which differentiate effectively between successful and non-successful clients.

5) To provide feedback to referring schools on findings in the above areas for the purpose of identifying possible curriculum changes. Knowledge of job opportunities, client characteristics and successes experienced may hold relevant implications for changes in program emphasis, course materials, teaching styles or alternative programs available to students.

Sample and Population

The sample group was comprised of all clients referred to the Y.M.C.A. Employment Program from January 1 to December 31, 1974. All clients referred in one year were contacted, so as to provide

a fairly equivalent time-frame for follow-up purposes. Also, since a variety of schools and agencies referred clients to the program, this was considered to be one way of assessing possible differences in employment success of students trained in various programs. The particular year, 1974, was chosen since changes in the format for recording client activities in the Y. M. C. A. Employment Program statistics were made in that year. The statistical format remained consistent subsequent to 1974, which facilitated cross-validation of the subjects' returns. The total number of clients referred in 1974, as recorded in Employment Program statistics and files, equalled 110. Questionnaires were mailed to all clients at their most recently recorded address. Initial returns of the mail-out questionnaires equalled nineteen (approximately 17 percent of the sample group). Due to the longitudinal nature of the study, considerable time had elapsed since many of the subjects had last been contacted by the program, resulting in a high mortality rate for returns. Subsequent follow-up contacts with non-responding subjects increased the returns to forty-four, or 40 percent of the total sampled population.

According to Travers (1969) initial returns for a direct-mail questionnaire survey can be expected to show only a 20 percent response, but this can usually be boosted to 30 to 40 percent if non-respondents are contacted a second and third time, or higher returns may be obtained through personal contact with remaining non-respondents. Lehmann and Mehrens (1979) suggest that 40 to 50 percent

is considered a good return on mail-out questionnaires.

A Chi-Square analysis was performed for common factors of both the respondent and nonrespondent groups, to test the representativeness of the obtained sample. Due to the low percentage of returns for this study, however, the findings must be reviewed with caution and should be considered as only an approximate indication of total client activity.

Questionnaire Design

Information which was sought from the research included demographic data and some description of factors which differentiated successfully- from nonsuccessfully-employed clients.

A preliminary questionnaire was constructed and reviewed by professionals in the field, to check the reading level, face validity and type of questions being asked. Experts used included a professor in the Department of Educational Psychology, a principal of two Edmonton schools serving the mentally handicapped, and Y.M.C.A. staff members involved with the Employment Program.

Based on the recommendations of these people the questionnaire was revised and was sent to three former Y.M.C.A. Employment Program clients for a further assessment. The clients selected for the pilot study had been referred to the program in years other than 1974, and they had shown various levels of reading ability and employment success. Each of these clients was asked to, 1) complete the questionnaire to the best of his/her ability and 2) provide verbal or

written feedback regarding their ability to comprehend the questions; note any problems which they encountered in responding to these; and also any suggestions for changes. In all cases, these subjects were able to comprehend and respond to the questions with no problems. No suggestions for further changes were made.

The revised form of the questionnaire was mailed to each of the clients in the sample group in December, 1978. A covering letter explained the purpose of the research and offered a telephone number to call, should the client encounter any difficulties (Appendix A).

Clients' responses to the survey questions were cross-referenced with information from their personal files, as well as monthly statistics reports, to ensure accuracy and completeness of their replies. Where minor discrepancies or omissions existed, the Employment Program file reports or statistics summaries were considered more accurate. In the case of major discrepancies between the clients' reports and other information sources, it was decided the data for that client were invalid and therefore were omitted from the final analysis.

Treatment of the Data

The data collected from the survey were analyzed by frequency tabulation and proportions. Item responses were compared in terms of successful versus nonsuccessful employment records. Chi Square analyses were performed to test the significance of selected factors in relation to employment success, as well as to test the representative-

ness of the obtained sample, in comparison with the total sample group. Chi Square analyses were also conducted to assess the relationship between the clients' placement successes in jobs, compared to:

a) whether or not the job was related to their vocational training in school, and

b) how they found the job (Y. M. C. A. program, on their own, through friends or family, etc.).

The Null Hypotheses being tested in this study were:

Hypothesis 1: No significant difference exists between the observed and expected values for respondent and non-respondent groups.

Hypothesis 2: No significant difference exists between the observed and expected values for employment success (i. e. employment success is independent of other client variables measured by the questionnaire.

Hypothesis 3: No significant difference exists between the observed and expected values for job placement success (i. e. placement success is independent of relationships of the job to vocational training received in school, and means by which the job was found).

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

Three major hypotheses were constructed for the purpose of this study, to assess the appropriateness of the research method used, and to identify factors related to employment and job placement success of mentally handicapped clients from the Y. M. C. A. Employment Program.

Appropriateness of the Research Method

The appropriateness of using a mail-out questionnaire for descriptive research was assessed on the basis of the response sample received, and on the representativeness of the respondent sample compared to the non-respondent sample. A total of 44 clients were included in the respondent group, which represented 40 percent of the total group surveyed.

A breakdown of results obtained by research questionnaire mail-out and means by which responses were received is presented in Table I.

To test the representativeness of the respondent sample received, compared to the non-respondent sample, a Chi-Square analysis was utilized. The null hypothesis being tested, Hypothesis 1, stated: No significant difference exists between the observed and expected values for respondent and non-respondent groups (i.e. response group membership is independent of the client variables measured by the

Table I

Response Results Obtained for Mail-Out Questionnaire

	Number Responding	Percent of Total
Initial Mail-out	19	17.3
Second Mail-out	4	3.6
Follow-up Telephone Calls	19	17.3
In-person Interviews	2	1.8
Questionnaires Returned - No Current Address Available	49	44.5
Questionaires Not Returned - Follow-up Calls Unsuccessful	15	13.7
Clients Deceased	2	1.8
Total	110	100

questionnaire).

All variables for which data were available for both groups were included in the Chi-Square analysis. These were:

a) sex.

b) last school attended.

c) school system attended.

d) source of referral to the Y.M.C.A. Program.

e) year of graduation or leaving school.

f) highest grade or year passed.

g) vocational training received.

h) major vocational area of study.

i) number of work experience placements.

j) disabilities (physical and emotional).

Two other variables: IQ scores (measured on the Wechsler scale) and oral reading scores (measured by the W.R.A.T.) were also considered, but had to be excluded from the analysis because of missing data for some subjects.

The Chi-Square analysis supported the independence of the respondent versus non-respondent groups on factors of sex, school and school system attended, referral source, vocational training received, and major area of vocational study. However, the variables of year of graduation or leaving program; highest grade or year passed; number of work experience placements; and disability were dependent on response group membership, according to the Chi Squares. Chi

Squares for these four variables were significant at the 0.01 level.

For year of graduation or leaving school the major contribution to the Chi Square was from group three--clients who graduated after 1974. A greater proportion of returns was received for this group than was statistically expected.

Fewer than the expected number of respondents had spent less than three years in their school programs, but more respondents than expected had completed three years or graduated from their programs.

For number of work experience placements there were fewer clients who had no work experience than would be expected in the respondent group, but more than the expected number of respondents reported one or more work experience placements.

The major contribution to the Chi Square for Disabilities came from the third group--clients with emotional/social disabilities. The proportion of clients with emotional/social disabilities was greater for the respondent group than was statistically expected.

The obtained Chi Squares and Probabilities for response group membership versus selected demographic variables are presented in Table II.

Table II

Chi Square Values and Probabilities for Respondent/Non-Respondent Group vs. Selected Demographic Variables

	Chi Square	Degrees of Freedom	Probability
Sex	1.095	1	0.295
Last school attended	4.349	4	0.361
School system attended	1.088	2	0.580
Source of referral to YMCA program	3.762	5	0.584
Year of graduation or leaving school	13.850	2	0.001 *
Number of years in school program	14.545	2	0.001 *
Vocational training received	0.537	1	0.464
Major vocational area of study	3.762	5	0.584
Number of Work-Experience placements	21.513	2	0.000 *
Disabilities (physical and emotional)	12.033	2	0.002 *

* Significant at the 0.01 level

Factors Related to Successful Employment

Successful employment, for the purposes of this study, was defined as having worked for a total of six months (130 days) during the calendar year. Clients were considered to be employed if they were working in the competitive labour force, attending post-secondary educational or training institutions, or occupied as full-time home-makers, and not seeking other employment.

Table III presents the distribution of clients based on their annual success of employment over the four years covered by this study, and Table IV presents the clients' employment status at the time of the survey being conducted.

A very slight trend was noted in the data towards an increase in numbers of clients successfully employed for each subsequent year. At the time of the survey a total of 25 clients, or 56.8% of the research sample, was employed.

Hypothesis 2 stated: No significant difference exists between the observed and expected values for employment success (i.e. employment success is independent of other client variables measured by the questionnaire).

A Chi-Square analysis testing Hypothesis 2 was conducted to assess whether any relationship existed between client characteristics sampled by the questionnaire and the annual employment success obtained by the clients. For the purposes of this analysis clients were separated into four groups, based on their pattern of employment

Table III

Client Distribution According to Their Annual Employment Success

	Successfully Employed	Percent of Total	Not Successfully Employed	Percent of Total
1975	21	47.7	23	52.3
1976	25	56.8	19	43.2
1977	25	56.8	19	43.2
1978	27	61.4	17	38.6
Over All Four Years	25	56.8	19	43.2

Table IV

Clients Employment Status at Time of Survey

	Number of Clients	Percent of Total
Employed	25	56.8
Not Employed	19	43.2
Total	44	100

success over the four-year period:

a) Group 1 consisted of clients who were successfully employed in all four years (N = 17).

b) Group 2 consisted of clients who were never successfully employed in any of the four years (N = 10).

c) Group 3 consisted of clients who showed a positive trend in employment success; that is, they were initially unsuccessful, but achieved successful employment in later years (N = 8).

d) Group 4 consisted of clients whose employment success was variable or declined the four years period (N = 9).

Client characteristics which were included in the Chi-Square analyses for employment success were:

a) sex.

b) last school attended.

c) school system attended.

d) source of referral to the Y.M.C.A. Program.

e) year of graduation or leaving school.

f) highest grade or year passed.

g) vocational training received.

h) major vocational area of study.

i) number of work experience placements.

j) disabilities (physical and emotional).

k) marital status.

l) post-secondary training received.

m) possession of a driver's license.

n) taking prescribed medications.

o) place of residence.

p) involvement in leisure activities.

q) IQ scores.

r) oral reading scores.

Most of the variables sampled by the questionnaire showed no significant interaction with clients' ratings of successful versus unsuccessful employment, supporting the null hypothesis that employment success is independent of these other variables. Significant results at the 0.05 level were obtained on two factors, however--postsecondary training received, and possession of a driver's license.

For the variable of postsecondary training received, most of the contribution to Chi Square appeared to be from three sources. Group 2 clients who were never successful in measured employment success, were more frequently involved in rehabilitative or sheltered training programs after leaving school than statistically expected. Clients in group 4 (those showing inconsistent or declining employment success) showed greater than expected frequencies for involvement in life skills or personal development programs, and greater than expected frequencies for no postsecondary training. A fourth contributor to Chi Square, which was slightly less significant than the above three, was from clients in group 1 (always successfully employed), who were also more frequently observed to have no postsecondary training.

Although postsecondary training and driver's licenses were the only two factors actually achieving statistical significance, a third factor--involvement in leisure activities--very nearly approached significance (probability = 0.058). Clients in group 3 (showing a positive trend in employment success) more often demonstrated limited leisure skills, and clients in group 4 (variable or declining employment success) were more often classed as socially active, but pursuing no personal interests or hobbies.

Job Placement Success

Clients were described as having been successfully placed if they remained in a job for three months or longer. Statistics were compiled for all job placements held by each client for the period of January 1, 1975 to December 31, 1978. During this period, a total of 114 job placements were made for the forty-four clients surveyed. Number of placements per client ranged from zero to eight, with a mean number of 2.6 placements per client.

Placement success was determined for each job held, and a Chi-Square analysis was applied to assess the relationship of placement success to relevant vocational training for the job and to how the client found the job.

The null hypothesis being tested, Hypothesis 3, stated: No significant difference exists between the observed and expected values for job placement success (i.e. placement success is independent of the relationship of the job to vocational training received in school, and

means by which the job was found).

The Chi Square obtained for success of placement compared to relationship of the job to clients' vocational training was 0.443 (df = 2). The probability of obtaining this value by chance was not significant at the 0.05 level (probability = 0.8), therefore the results supported the null hypothesis of independence of the two factors. That is, success of job placements was independent of whether or not the job was related to the vocational training received by the client in school.

Table V illustrates the contingency table of observed cases occurring for each category of the interaction between placement success and job relationship to vocational training.

A more detailed breakdown of the relationship between vocational training received and jobs which were obtained by the clients is presented in Table VI, based on the number of previous jobs held by the client.

The relationship between job placement success and how the job was found was statistically significant at the 0.05 level, according to the obtained Chi Square of 12.232 (df = 4, probability = 0.016). Based on these findings the null hypothesis was rejected--job placement success was dependent on the means by which the job was found.

Table VII illustrates the contingency table of observed cases occurring for each category of the interaction between placement success and means by which the job was found.

An assessment of the contribution to Chi Square from each of the

Table V

Success of Job Placements versus Relationship of the Job to Clients' Vocational Training

	Successful Placements	Unsuccessful Placements	Total
Job Related to Vocational Training	26	18	44
Job Not Related to Vocational Training	23	20	43
No Vocational Training Received (12 clients)	14	13	27
Total	63	51	114

Table VI

Relationship Between Vocational Training and Job Placements for Each Number of Jobs Held

	Number of Jobs Related to Vocational Training	% of Jobs Related to Vocational Training	Number of Jobs Not Related to Training	% of Jobs Not Related to Training	Number of Clients Placed Who Had No Vocational Training
Job #1	21	55.26	7	18.42	10
Job #2	10	37.04	9	33.33	8
Job #3	5	31.25	8	50.0	3
Job #4	2	16.67	8	66.67	2
Job #5	3	33.33	5	55.56	1
Job #6	2	33.33	3	50.0	1
Job #7	1	25.0	2	50.0	1
Job #8	0	0.0	1	50.0	1
All Jobs	44	38.60	43	37.72	27

Table VII

Success of Job Placements Versus How the Job was Found

	Successful Placements	Unsuccessful Placements	Total
Through Y. M. C. A. Employment Program	32	19	51
By clients themselves	16	28	44
Through friends or family	8	3	11
Through another agency	7	1	8
Total	63	51	114

categories identified the second group--jobs found by the clients themselves--as the major contributor. Considerably more jobs found by the clients themselves were rated as unsuccessful than was proportionately expected. All other sources showed slightly higher frequencies of successful placements than expected.

Also in terms of proportions the Y.M.C.A. Employment, family or friends, and other agencies, consistently found a greater proportion of successful versus unsuccessful jobs, while more job placements found by clients themselves were unsuccessful than successful.

In order to examine more closely the specific relationship between placements made by the Y.M.C.A. Employment program and job placement success, data were compiled and contrasted for each successive job placement obtained by every client.

A greater portion of the successful job placements were made by the Y.M.C.A. Employment Program for the first three jobs held by a client. The frequency of unsuccessful job placements made by the Y.M.C.A. Employment Program was highly variable for number of jobs held by the client. Table VIII summarizes the data for successful versus non-successful job placements made by the Y.M.C.A. Employment Program.

Clients' Perceptions of the Y.M.C.A. Employment Program

The perceived value of the Y.M.C.A. Employment Program, from the clients' point of view, is illustrated in Table IX on the basis of clients' responses to three questionnaire items:

Table VIII

Frequency Distribution for Successful Versus Unsuccessful Job Placements

	Number of Successful Placements Made by Y.M.C.A. Program	Total Number of Successful Placements	Proportion of Successful Placements Made by Y.M.C.A. Program	Number of Unsuccessful Placements Made by Y.M.C.A. Program	Total Number of Unsuccessful Placements	Proportion of Unsuccessful Placements Made by Y.M.C.A. Program	Proportion of Success for Total Placement
Job #1	18	25	72.0%	5	13	38.5%	65.79%
Job #2	5	9	55.6%	6	18	33.3%	33.33%
Job #3	6	11	54.5%	0	5	0.0%	68.75%
Job #4	1	7	14.3%	4	5	80.0%	58.33%
Job #5	1	5	20.0%	2	4	50.0%	55.56%
Job #6	1	3	33.3%	1	3	33.3%	50.0 %
Job #7	0	2	0.0%	1	2	50.0%	50.0 %
Job #8	0	1	0.0%	0	1	0.0%	50.0 %
For All Jobs	32	63	50.8%	19	51	37.2%	55.2 %

Table IX

Clients Perceptions of the Y.M.C.A.
Employment Program

	Number of Clients	Percent of Total
Employment Program seen as helpful	33	75.0
Placement officer's name remembered	22	50.0
Contact maintained with placement officer	7	15.9

1) Did you find the Y.M.C.A. Employment Program helpful?

2) Do you remember the name of your Y.M.C.A. Employment Program placement officer?

3) Have you kept in touch with this person?

The questions allowed for simple 'yes' or 'no' answers, which were tabulated and are presented in Table IX.

An open-ended question: "Do you have any comments to make about the Y.M.C.A. Employment Program?", was also included in the questionnaire. All responses which were received for this question are presented as written by the respondent, in Appendix D.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Appropriateness of the Research Method

One of the expressed purposes for this study was to assess the appropriateness of a mail-out questionnaire survey as a research method for long term follow-up of mentally handicapped clients. This particular format was chosen to facilitate ease of data collection from a relatively large sample group, and to minimize variance related to interviewer's effects. The use of mail-out questionnaires for descriptive survey research involving the mentally handicapped was not reported in any of the literature reviewed. As a result, there was no precedent available to act as an indicator of whether or not such an approach would be feasible. However, since most of the questions being asked were relatively straightforward, easy to comprehend, and generally required factual answers, a questionnaire format appeared applicable.

The initial and subsequent mailings resulted in returns for only 20.9 percent of the total sampled group, however, through a number of follow-up telephone calls and two in-person interviews, the returns were increased to 40 percent of the total sample. According to Lehmann and Mehrens (1979), a 40-50 percent return on mailed-out questionnaire surveys is considered adequate, and generally is all that can be obtained. For the purposes of the statistical analysis conducted

in this study, however, the limited sample obtained presented some concerns regarding representativeness of the respondent group, and ability to generalize from this data to the total experimental group.

In order to assess the representativeness of the obtained sample compared to the group of all clients referred to the Employment Program in 1974, a Chi-Square analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: No significant difference exists between the observed and expected values for the respondent and non-respondent groups (i.e. response group membership is independent of other variables measured by the questionnaire).

The Chi-Square analysis supported the independence of variables of sex, school attended, school system, referral source, vocational training received and major areas of vocational study. For these variables, then, the respondent group could be considered adequately representative of the sampled population of Y.M.C.A. clients.

However, variables of year of graduation on leaving school; highest grade or year passed; number of work-experience placements; and disabilities were significantly dependent on response group, at the 0.01 level. The interaction between these variables and the clients' response groups may, however, be due more to insufficient data available, rather than actual differences between the two groups.

More information was generally available for the respondent group, since information from students' files could be updated from

questionnaire data for respondents who had lost contact with the Employment Program. For non-respondents, however, such updating of information was not possible, thereby possibly creating a bias in the data reported for students not maintaining contact with the Program.

It is not possible, however, from the data and statistics available, to accurately identify or prove any causal relationship. Any observed relationships in other questionnaire variables must, therefore, be considered representative of the respondent sample only.

Difficulties encountered in assessing the representativeness of the responses received and the relatively small percentage of questionnaire returns, severely restricted the ability to generalize results of the present study to the population sampled. The most significant contributing factor to these limitations appeared to be the loss of contact with clients over the four-year follow-up period covered by this study. No current addresses could be found for over 44 percent of the sampled group. For these subjects, other research techniques such as personal interviews and telephone contacts would have proven equally futile. Thus, it is not so much the mail-out questionnaire survey format which appears inappropriate, as problems associated with the time factor involved in a longitudinal study of this nature.

Difficulties encountered due to loss of contact with clients over long time spans might be alleviated considerably by conducting annual follow-up surveys of previous Employment Program clients. Such

reviews would facilitate research studies by providing accurate follow-up information each year, and updating records for current addresses or telephone numbers. Other benefits might also be gained. Clients who had lost contact with the program, but who required further employment assistance, might be reminded of the services available to them. Clients who were successful in finding employment on their own might provide ideas for new placement areas or models for encouraging greater independence of other program clients.

The use of a mail-out questionnaire method of research with the mentally handicapped, while of limited usefulness in the present study, might still be found appropriate for follow-up surveys with a shorter time frame. There appears to be considerable value in further experimentation with this method, particularly when combined with follow-up telephone contacts for approximately annual reviews of ex-client activities.

Factors Related to Successful Employment

Clients were considered successfully employed if they worked for a total of six months during a full calendar year. Success of employment for all clients was assessed for each year from 1975 to 1978. A very slight trend was observed in the results towards an increase in numbers of clients successfully employed for each subsequent year. In 1975, 47.7 percent of the total respondent group were rated as successfully employed. By 1978 this figure had climbed to 61.4 percent.

A number of possible factors might reasonably be assumed to

contribute to this upward trend for employment success. Clients, in their first years after leaving school, may be uncertain about which jobs they would find most suitable or appealing. The initial years of employment may reflect a 'trying-out" period where several different jobs are attempted and found inappropriate before the clients are able to "settle into" a successful employment situation. Another probable contributing factor is that of increased experience. As the client spends more time in the labour market he may become more aware of employers' expectations and better equipped to deal with job demands due to more experiences in actual work settings. Related to this factor might be the influence of increasing developmental maturity related to the client's age and amount of time away from the school setting with its relatively fewer demands for responsibility. It is also possible that greater community awareness and acceptance of the mentally handicapped as potential workers over the four year period of the study resulted in more employment opportunities being opened to the mentally handicapped.

Many other possible factors could likely be hypothesized for the observed improvement in employment success of the mentally handicapped clients sampled in the present study. Attempts to analyze such causal relationships through statistical research, however, would present enormous problems due to difficulties in isolating and defining significant interacting variables. For the purpose of the present study, therefore, an analysis of factors which might be related to employment

success was restricted to relatively specific demographic data which could be accurately elicited by means of a survey questionnaire and information from clients' files.

The null hypothesis was defined: Hypothesis 2: No significant difference exists between the observed and expected values for employment success (i.e. employment success is independent of other client variables measured by the questionnaire); and was tested by a Chi-Square analysis of the obtained data. Clients were divided into four groups based on their obtained employment success:

a) Group 1 consisted of clients who were successfully employed in all four years (N = 17).

b) Group 2 consisted of clients who were never successfully employed in any of the four years (N = 10).

c) Group 3 consisted of clients who showed a positive trend in employment success; that is, they were initially unsuccessful, but achieved successful employment in later years (N = 8).

d) Group 4 consisted of clients whose employment success was variable or declined the four year period (N = 9).

The results of the Chi-Square analysis identified only two variables which interacted significantly with the measures of employment success. These were postsecondary training received, and possession of a driver's license. All other variables measured were found to be independent of employment success. That is, for the forty-four subjects included in this study, differences in achieved employment success did

not depend on the clients' sex, school attended, vocational area, etc.

For the variable of postsecondary training received, most of the contribution to the significance of the Chi Square appeared to be from three sources:

1) Group 2 clients, who were never successful in measured employment success, were more frequently involved in rehabilitative or sheltered training programs after leaving school.

Referrals to sheltered work settings and rehabilitation programs were generally made only for those clients who appeared to have little likelihood of success in a competitive work environment. Such assessment was usually based on very poor performance in the school setting, or numerous failures in job placements. The observed interaction between lack of employment success and involvement in rehabilitation or sheltered programs reflects this tendency to use such settings as a "last resort" or "dumping ground" for clients with multiple difficulties, and should not be interpreted as an indicator of poor employment preparation provided by those agencies.

2) Clients in group 4 (those showing inconsistent or declining employment success) showed greater than expected frequencies for involvement in life skills or personal development programs.

3) Clients in group 4 showed greater than expected frequencies for no postsecondary training.

Clients who were involved in life skills or personal development programs usually had been identified as having personal or social

adjustment problems on the basis of behavioral observations made in the home, school or work setting.

Postsecondary training involved courses in academic or vocational trades beyond the high school level. Clients who entered such programs would generally be considered intellectually quite capable, but lacking in prerequisite knowledge or skills for a specific career.

The inconsistent or declining employment success of clients in group 4 was, therefore, most likely a factor of personal or social adjustment problems, possibly compounded with limited intellectual abilities, rather than a result of lack of specific vocational skills.

A fourth contributor to Chi Square, which was slightly less significant than the above three, was from clients in group 1 (always successfully employed), who were also more frequently observed to have no postsecondary training. It appears reasonable to assume that these clients possessed the necessary prerequisite job skills by the time they left school, and were therefore able to find appropriate employment after graduation without requiring further training.

Based on the above results, it would appear that the students who could benefit most from further interventions in the training program are those with personal, social or emotional difficulties. There appears to be a need for schools for the mentally handicapped to investigate further courses in life skills, leisure education, and communication skills programs.

The observed significant relationship between employment success

and possession of a driver's license supports a similar finding by Dinger, Myers and Berner (1973). It appears that similar client characteristics may be required for successfully obtaining a driver's license as those needed for successfully holding a job. Exactly what those characteristics are is impossible to determine based on the data available. Certainly, the driver's license itself is not the significant variable since very few of the job placements made actually required driving skills on the job. Perhaps one related factor could be the employer's perception of a mentally-handicapped individual with a driver's license as being more competent or "normalized" than one without it.

A third factor which was closely related to employment success, although not at a significant level (probability = 0.058), was involvement in leisure activities. Clients in group 3 (showing a positive trend in employment success) more often demonstrated limited leisure skills (watching television constituted their main activity outside of the work setting) and clients in group 4 (variable or declining employment success) were more often classed as socially active (going out with friends or family), but pursuing no personal interests or hobbies. Clients in group 1 (successfully employed), as expected, usually reported higher levels of social activity and personal interests.

These results provide some support for the previously noted significance of personal/social adjustment in relation to employment success. However, the data for group 3 appears to indicate that, while

adequate leisure skills may facilitate successful employment, they are not a necessary prerequisite for employment success.

Job Placement Success

A successful job placement was defined as one in which the client worked at a job in the competitive labour market for three or more consecutive months. Of the 114 total job placements made for the forty-four clients sampled, 63 placements (55.2% of total placements) were considered successful.

The relationship of job placement success to relevant vocational training for the job and to how the client found the job was assessed by Chi Square. The null hypothesis,

Hypothesis 3, stated: No significant difference exists between the observed and expected values for job placement success (i.e. placement success is independent of the relationship of the job to vocational training received in school, and means by which the job was found).

The Chi Square obtained for success of placement compared to relationship of the job to clients' vocational training supported the null hypothesis. That is, success of job placement was independent of whether or not the job was related to the vocational training received by the client. For the group sampled in this study, the clients' ability to find suitable jobs did not seem to depend on having previous experience or training in the specific job area. Even clients who received no vocational courses in school were able to experience approximately

equal proportions of successful placements as those who had received specific vocational training related to their work.

These results could be interpreted to imply that specific vocational training did not really improve the likelihood of job placement success for the mentally handicapped clients surveyed. However, it would be inappropriate to draw such a conclusion without first examining the effects of other possible intervening factors. One such factor might be the involvement of the Y.M.C.A. Employment Program. Special placement and follow-up assistance provided by the program could, perhaps, reduce the effects of any disadvantages created by lack of specific vocational training.

In order to assess this possibility, a second Chi-Square analysis was conducted of job placement success compared to how the clients found their jobs. The obtained Chi Square was significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that placement success was, indeed, dependent on how the job was found. The largest contribution to the Chi Square was from the category of jobs found by the clients themselves. A greater proportion of the job placements made by clients themselves were rated as unsuccessful, while placements made by any other source were much more often successful than unsuccessful. It appears that the clients surveyed required some form of assistance or intervention in order to experience a greater likelihood of placement success. Any assessment of other factors related to placement success must, therefore, be controlled for the variable of how the job was found.

Since the Chi Square for job success versus relationship to vocational training included all placements, regardless of how they were found, it is not possible to draw accurate conclusions regarding the effect of related vocational training on job placement success. It is conceivable that, had all clients been required to find their own jobs, those with specifically related vocational training might have shown a significantly greater proportion of job successes than clients without training.

A more detailed assessment of the role of the Y. M. C. A. Employment Program in finding successful job placements was conducted by analyzing each successive job held by the clients. Of the 63 total successful placements, just over one half (50. 8%) were made by the Y. M. C. A. Employment Program, while only 37. 2% of the unsuccessful placements were made by the program. Interestingly, however, when each job placement was examined, it was apparent that placements by the Employment Program were much more frequently successful for the first three jobs held by a client. For the clients' first job placements, in particular, the employment program was highly effective; finding 72% of the successful jobs.

These results would seem to suggest that the critical role of the Y. M. C. A. Employment Program is to get the clients started on their first jobs and, hopefully, from there the clients might develop the skills and resources to find future placements on their own. This role appears to be consistent with clients' perceptions of the program since, while 75% of the clients maintained that the program had been helpful

to them, only 15.9% reported maintaining any contact with their placement officer. Presumably clients who felt they required continued placement or follow-up assistance would have remained in contact or become reinvolved with the program.

Summary and Implications

Because of the sample group size and non-representativeness on some variables measured, it was not possible to generalize from the results of this study to the population of all mentally handicapped clients served by the Y.M.C.A. Employment Program. For the group sampled, however, the Y.M.C.A. Employment Program provided a significantly greater proportion of successful job placements than those found by the clients themselves. Exactly which program components were most influential in producing higher job success rates could not be elicited from the data available, however it seems quite likely that the placement officers' contacts with and screening of prospective employers produced some of the effect. Some guidelines for employers hiring the handicapped are presented in Appendix D. These suggestions were based on factors generally emphasized by the placement officers, as well as ideas provided through other placement studies and literature from associations for the mentally handicapped.

It is hoped that these suggestions may prove useful to prospective employers and other placement services for the mentally handicapped. An interesting focus for further research in this area might be to assess the employers' attitudes to mentally handicapped workers, perhaps

contrasting employers involved with the program with others who have never employed mentally handicapped workers. An improved awareness of possible stereotypes or expectations of the employers could assist Employment Program staff in effectively representing their clients' marketable skills. Also, implications for further public education programs might be obtained.

In the area of employment success, it was found that 61.4% of the mentally handicapped clients surveyed were successfully incorporated into the competitive labour market by 1978. The factors which were significantly related to employment success--postsecondary training, driver's licenses and leisure activities--all carried some implications for educational programs for the mentally handicapped. An increased emphasis on personal and social skills development through provision of more life skills counseling, and communication skills in school programs and courses might aid those clients who appeared to have marketable job skills, yet often could not maintain a successful placement.

The importance of adequate leisure skills and activities had already been recognized by the Y.M.C.A. Employment Program staff, who responded by developing a leisure education program. It would be interesting to conduct further research with clients involved in this group, either through a pre- and post-training test or with a representative control sample, to assess the influence which this program has exerted on participants. If it proved successful, the focus of this

program for developing clients' personal knowledge and involvement with their peers and the community, might offer some valuable information to schools which train the mentally handicapped. All too often, it seems, the schools' physical education and social programs involve large group activities: sports like volleyball and basketball, and school dances or teas which are organized by the staff, offer little carry-over into the working world where the students must rely on themselves and a few close friends for social activities. Individual or small group activities planned by students themselves, though more difficult to supervise, might ultimately be much more useful (badminton, picnics planned by five or six students, or registration in community-based programs, to mention only a very few).

Driver education is already offered at some schools and appears significant enough that it should be encouraged whenever possible.

In summary, it appears that integration of the mentally handicapped as successful and contributing members of the employment community is not only possible--it is becoming more and more a reality. With continued research and assessment of both educational and employment programs provided to the mentally handicapped, it should be possible to increase these experiences of success even more, but a change of focus may be required.

Charly, the mentally handicapped man portrayed in Flowers for Algernon, asked to be "made smart" so that he could do his work better, and not be ridiculed by his coworkers. He was used as a test

subject for a revolutionary treatment which increased his intelligence and gave him a magnificent repertoire of skills. However, Charly's social competence and emotional development were not able to keep up with his mental abilities--Charly agonized over his inability to really "fit" in either his previous world or the new one which he had entered.

The story reflects some of the concerns which appear to face us today. In the past decade, educational and vocational training programs for the mentally handicapped have developed remarkably. Mentally handicapped students are being given the skills and abilities to handle relatively complex and responsible jobs. Some of these students are entering the competitive work force with apparent ease--finding and maintaining successful jobs immediately after graduation. Other students, however, appear to have all the prerequisite vocational skills and knowledge to handle a job area, yet cannot adjust in a work setting, apparently due to some inadequacy in their personal, social or emotional make-up. It is this group of individuals which represents the "Charly's" of the mentally handicapped. In order to facilitate their acceptance and adjustment in a "normal" community role as a worker, it appears we will have to provide more individualized programming and social skills training designed to incorporate their emotional as well as their vocational development needs.

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APPENDIX A

THE RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE AND COVERING LETTER

9541 - 74 Avenue
EDMONTON, Alberta

November 30, 1978

Dear

I am sending you a list of questions to fill out telling about yourself and your jobs. I want to know how you have been doing since you first came to the YMCA Employment Program in 1974. This will help me find out if the YMCA Employment Program is helping people find good jobs, and how the program can be made better.

I would like you to fill out all the questions. Try not to leave any blank. If you have any problems or questions you can call me, Heike, at 432-7868 or 428-4342.

I need to have your answers back by December 15, 1978 so please do this as soon as you can. You can mail it back to me in the stamped envelope I have put in with this letter.

Thank you for your help.

Yours truly,

Heike Juergens

HJ:ap

YMCA EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM
FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your Name: _____
2. Address: _____
3. Phone Number: _____
4. Date of Birth: _____
5. Marital Status: _____ Married _____ Separated or Divorced
   _____ Single _____ Widowed
6. Last School Attended: _____
7. Year Graduated: 19_____
8. Grade or Year Passed: _____
9. What Vocational Courses did you take at this school?

   _____

   _____
10. How many work experiences or work study placements did you get in school?

    _____ None _____ One or Two _____ Three or more
11. Do you remember the name of your YMCA Employment Program Placement Officer?

    _____ Yes _____ No; Name: _____
12. Have you kept in touch with this person? _____ Yes _____ No
13. Did you find the YMCA Employment Program helpful? ___ Yes
    ____ No.
14. Did you take any special training program after you left school?

Please check:	How long were you in this program?
____ Tradeschool (N.A.I.T.)	_____
____ Apprenticeship Training	_____
____ Goodwill Rehabilitation Centre	_____
____ Western Industrial Research & Training Centre	_____
____ Hillside Apartments	_____
____ Life Skills	_____
____ Academic Courses	_____

____ YMCA Leisure Program _____

____ YMCA Pre Employment Classes _____

____ Other - Specify: _____

15. Do you have a Driver's License? _____ Yes _____ No.

16. Do you have any physical handicap? _____ Yes _____ No. (If yes, what is the handicap?) _____.

17. Are you taking medicine prescribed by a Doctor? ___ Yes ___ No. (Specify _____).

18. Do you live:
_____ With your parents.
_____ In your own house or apartment.
_____ In a place with one or two friends.
_____ In a group home or special residence.
_____ Other (Specify _____).

19. How do you usually spend your spare time?
_____ Watching T.V.
_____ Reading or doing hobbies
_____ Go out with friends
_____ Go out alone or with family
___ less than once a week
___ once a week
___ more than once a week.

20. Do you have a job right now? _____ Yes _____ No.

21. What is the name of your present employer? _____.

22. What is your position? _____.

23. What are your job duties? _____.

24. How long have you held this job? _____.

25. Did you find this job through the Y.M.C.A. Employment Program? _____ Yes _____ No.

26. If no, did you find this job
_____ on your own.
_____ through a relative or friend.
_____ through another agency (Name _____).
_____ other (specify _____).

27. How much do you get paid for your job? (specify per hour, per

month or per year) _____.

28. Is this job ____ Part Time, or ____ Full-Time?

29. How many jobs have you had since January, 1975? _____.

NOTE: PLEASE FILL OUT THE CHART ON THE NEXT PAGE AS COMPLETELY AS YOU CAN, TELLING ABOUT ALL THE JOBS YOU CAN REMEMBER WORKING AT SINCE JANUARY, 1975.

30. How did you fill out this questionnaire?

_____ By myself

_____ With help from my parents

_____ With help from my placement officer

_____ Other (Specify _____).

31. Do you have any comments to make about the YMCA Employment Program? _____

_____

_____

REMEMBER: IF YOU NEED ANY EXTRA HELP WITH THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, YOU CAN PHONE:

HEIKE AT 432-7868
OR 428-4342.

PLEASE MAIL THIS QUESTIONNAIRE BACK TO:

HEIKE JUERGENS
9541 74 Ave.
EDMONTON, T6E 1E5

(A STAMPED, ADDRESSED ENVELOPE IS PROVIDED FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE).

PLEASE FILL IN ALL YOUR JOBS SINCE JANUARY, 1974

Employer	Your Position	Was This: Part Time	Was This: Full Time	When Did You Start This Job	When Did You Leave This Job	Why Did You Leave This Job	How Much Were You Paid	Check How You Found This Job: YMCA Program	On Your Own	Through a Friend or Relative	Through Another Agency	Other

APPENDIX B

TABLES X - XXVII

FREQUENCIES AND PROPORTIONS OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO DESCRIPTIVE VARIABLES SAMPLED BY THE RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Table X

Distribution of Respondents According to Sex

	Frequency	Percent
Males	25	56.8
Females	19	43.2
Total	44	100.0

Table XI

Distribution of Respondents According to Last School

	Frequency	Percent
L. Y. Cairns	26	59.1
W. P. Wagner	8	18.2
St. Basil's	6	13.6
St. Joseph's	1	2.3
Other	3	6.8
Total	44	100.0

Table XII

Distribution of Respondents According to School System Attended

	Frequency	Percent
Edmonton Public	35	79.5
Edmonton Separate	8	18.2
Other	1	2.3
Total	44	100.0

Table XIII

Distribution of Respondents According to Source of Referral to Y.M.C.A. Program

	Frequency	Percent
L. Y. Cairns School	26	59.1
W. P. Wagner School	7	15.9
St. Basil's School	5	11.4
St. Joseph's School	2	4.5
Other School	1	2.3
Other Agency	3	6.8
Total	44	100.0

Table XIV

Distribution of Respondents According to Year Graduated from School

	Frequency	Percent
1973 or earlier	10	22.7
1974	22	50.0
After 1974	12	27.3
Total	44	100.0

Table XV

Distribution of Respondents According to Length of Time in School Program

	Frequency	Percent
1 year or less	4	9.1
2 - 3 years	4	9.1
graduated from program	36	81.8
Total	44	100.0

Table XVI

Distribution of Clients According to Vocational Training Received

	Frequency	Percent
Received Vocational Training	32	72.7
No Vocational Training	12	27.3
Total	44	100.0

Table XVII

Distribution of Respondents According to Major Vocational Training Area

	Frequency	Percent
Food Services (cooking, kitchen helper, waiter, dishwasher, etc.)	11	25.0
Woodwork (carpenter, building construction, painting & decorating)	3	6.8
Custodial (housekeeping, janitorial)	5	11.4
Office/Clerical (clerical, office practice, cashier)	3	6.8
Metal Work (welding, metals)	1	2.3
Mechanical (small motors, service station)	1	2.3
Domestic or Institutional (sewing, child care, nursing, beauty culture)	4	9.1
Horticulture (plant care, flower arranging)	4	9.1
No Vocational Courses	12	27.3
Total	44	100

Table XVIII

Distribution of Respondents According to Number of Work Experience Placements

	Frequency	Percent
None	13	29.5
One or Two	23	52.3
Three or More	8	18.2
Total	44	100.0

Table XIX

Distribution of Respondents According to Secondary Disability

	Frequency	Percent
Physical	18	40.9
None	17	38.6
Emotional/Social	9	20.5
Total	44	100.0

Table XX

Distribution of Respondents According to IQ Score

	Frequency	Percent
Over 90	2	4.5
80 - 89	6	13.6
70 - 79	6	13.6
69 and below	8	18.2
No score available	22	50.0
Total	44	100.0

Table XXI

Distribution of Respondents According to Oral Reading Grade Level

	Frequency	Percent
Less than grade 2.9	3	6.8
Grade 3.0 - 3.9	3	6.8
Grade 4.0 - 4.9	2	4.5
Grade 5.0 - 5.9	2	4.5
Grade 6 or above	6	13.6
No score available	28	63.6
Total	44	100.0

Table XXII

Distribution of Respondents According to Marital Status

	Frequency	Percent
Married	6	13.6
Single	38	86.4
Total	44	100.0

Table XXIII

Distribution of Respondents According to Postsecondary School Training

	Frequency	Percent
Academic or Vocational (Trades)	4	9.1
Rehabilitative or Sheltered	8	18.2
Life Skills or Personal Development	4	9.1
Two or More Areas	5	11.4
None	23	52.3
Total	44	100.0

Table XXIV

Distribution of Respondents According to Possession of a Driver's License

	Frequency	Percent
Driver's License	15	34.1
No Driver's License	29	65.9
Total	44	100.0

Table XXV

Distribution of Respondents According to Need for Prescribed Medications

	Frequency	Percent
Medication	15	34.1
No Medication	29	65.9
Total	44	100.0

Table XXVI

Distribution of Respondents According to Residence

	Frequency	Percent
Living with parents	26	59.1
In own house or apartment	14	31.8
Living with friends	2	4.5
Other	2	4.5
Total	44	100.0

Table XXVII

Distribution of Respondents According to Leisure Activities

	Frequency	Percent
Socially active, with interests (have hobbies, etc. and go out at least once/week with friends)	14	31.8
Limited social activity, with interests (have hobbies, etc., and go out once a week or less with family)	6	13.6
Socially active, no personal interests (go out with friends or family at least once/week)	15	34.1
Limited leisure skills (only watches T.V.)	9	20.5
Total	44	100.0

APPENDIX C

GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYERS HIRING MENTALLY HANDICAPPED WORKERS

Before the Interview:

1) Give the placement officer complete background information pertaining to the job: duties, salaries, hours, etc.

2) Plan a tour of the work site with the placement officer - discuss and demonstrate various tasks required.

3) Discuss prospective employees and get relevant details from the placement officer.

4) Find out about possible subsidized training programs to aid financially.

5) Get a complete description of services which will be available through the Employment Program.

During the Interview:

1) Use simple, concrete terms and expressions (e.g. 'your last job' rather than 'your previous position').

2) Ask questions requiring more than a 'yes' or 'no' answer.

3) Base your questions on background information obtained from the placement officer (e.g. "What did you do in your work experience at the bakery?").

4) Check understanding by asking the interviewee to repeat, in their own words, what you said (ask for repetition of only one concept at a time, not an entire job description).

5) Do not 'talk down' to the mentally handicapped person or treat him like a child, talk directly to him (not through the placement officer).

6) Try not to judge the applicant solely on his ability to express himself during the interview--not everyone verbalizes well.

7) If possible, give the applicant a tour of the work site; demonstrate and allow him to try some of the tasks required.

8) If you wish to think over the placement more, give the applicant a date by which he will be notified of your decision. Arrange a private interview with the placement officer to discuss your impressions and any concerns you have.

Training a Mentally Handicapped Worker:

1) With the help of the placement officer, ensure that the new employee is aware of working conditions and procedures prior to starting the job. Include:

- hours of work, salary, benefits, and time-off.
- to whom he reports and his work station.
- appropriate dress expected and special clothing or equipment required.
- procedure and number for calling in if he is ill or absent.
- safety regulations, hazardous areas and signs.

2) Identify one person, if at all possible, to be the trainer, supervisor and contact person for the mentally handicapped employee. Discuss the placement with that person prior to hiring and, if you wish, include him in the hiring interview. Introduce this individual to the employee as the person to whom he should direct any questions about his work.

3) Provide an orientation to the job site. (Introduce coworkers; show locations of washrooms, lunchroom, lockers, storage; demonstrate use of the timeclock.) Expect two or three days at least for adjustment to this new environment.

4) Begin job training with a brief explanation of what needs to be done, clearly stating what to do first and showing where to locate supplies to use.

5) Teach one task at a time, and allow time for proper mastery of each task before going on to the next. Also give directions one at a time and be specific. Post directions at work stations.

6) Show the worker how to do each task. Verbalize each procedure as you perform it with him watching. Let him repeat it for you ("Now you show me what you're supposed to do") and have him verbalize with his actions. Make any corrections in the way he performs each step.

7) Once all tasks are mastered individually, establish a routine. Give instructions in sequential order ("When you come in each morning, do ... first. Then ...").

8) Ask questions to verify his grasp of instructions, making sure he is keeping up with you. Don't assume that he understands just because no questions are asked. ("What do you do next?", "What do you do with ... ?".)

9) Provide very close supervision initially, and correct errors in his work immediately. Do not try to be "kind" by overlooking small

errors. All you will do, is encourage 'wrong' learning which will be much harder to change later.

10) Regular feedback to the new employee regarding his job performance will improve his efficiency ("This is done right, but do ... better"). Be generous with praise and reinforcement. A sincere compliment when a task is completed satisfactorily will build confidence and reduce initial anxiety.

11) If you want the employee to improve or change a specific area of performance, you should again show him exactly what to do, and repeat the above steps as for a new routine.

12) Follow-up and evaluation should be informal and continuous. Check often to follow progress and taper off supervision gradually as the duties are mastered correctly.

13) Before leaving the employee on his own, be sure that he knows two things:

a) What to do when he is finished with the present task.

b) Where and to whom he should report if he has a question or problem.

14) Keep the placement officer informed of the worker's progress and, if necessary, call the placement officer out to the job site to assist you with training.

APPENDIX D

CLIENTS' COMMENTS ABOUT THE Y.M.C.A. EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

"Heike Juergens is a good YMCA Employment council."

"Yes, I would very much like to have a placement officer and I would like to get a part-time job."

"It was a good program."

"I wish they could help me more finding a job because I been with them since 1974 four years there has been to many changes in this program. There also has been to many placement officers for me they hav't foud the right job for me. I had Beriddet O conner she was the best."

"Due to the insecurity and the passing of time I would most Likely need to get reaguainted with your program."

"It helped me in my first job."

"It was very helpful to me. In a way I have to this day been very happy with that decsion."

"It was good."

"I got very little help from all the agencies and placement officers. I won't go back."

"It's helpful. If you need help with applications, they will help you."

"I thought it was good. It helped when I needed."

"Its a good program."

"I will phone them again if I need it. I liked the program."

"I think its a good idea, and I hope they keep up the good work."

"We feel that is excellent and really a big help with people like

Kathleen." (mother completed)

"Very helpful. Please note Murray left Edmonton to be closer to home." (mother completed)